2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

781
forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see 764
me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat. [183]

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained 781
wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congrega- 764
tion gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, 795
full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to 184
God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(*e*) *Prestige at funerals*

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning 764
depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child— 555
there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than 556
for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumbi*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the 764
amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the 556

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

at the groom's home (*ulusukusula*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusuya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibelaga* ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took
● [13] the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings
[20] and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

845 Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and
431 after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due.

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahale*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office.

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Kaeso (173):

> I made fire at the 1920 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me.

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the concept of *amahale*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 59-64, 90.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngoode FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kings do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(3) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilo (177) in 1933 it was Mwaboputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (118) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobokasa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

These chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1933 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the grandson, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 3 (1950), pp. 19–23; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 107; A. L. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 209; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abantu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mawele*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mawele*) the word "black" (*mtima*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mawele* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property, with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Hatkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

directed towards heroes who are also forefathers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kasitile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide supra*, pp. 118-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the *ukukwa*, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (*ukukwa*) and bringing home the bride (*ukukela*), but new songs and dancers replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

9r Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797A
It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a 795X
more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their 779
leaders have sprung, and Ngumeia habitually wears conspicuous
vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different [796]
denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants
abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and
simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear
tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to
express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In
this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans,
for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual,
whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well
as in the rituals of the Church.

(e) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by 797X
pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in 795X
the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and
cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound
differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the pre-
occupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, [592]
like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormal- [589]
ity, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six
children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no
longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are
profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals
regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social [595]
change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have
many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a [584]
girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and
homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated [838]
since they have no wives and cannot marry if the older men are
polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total [836]
separation of the sex activities of members of successive genera-
tions, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother [561]
and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-
law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' [183]
and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply mono-
gamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confessing Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective—but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian tradition: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: if a pagan dreams of converse (*ukwangala*) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, sweetcorn, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, cherimoya, kapok, sycamore and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his imprisonment for manslaughter. He still holds much of the prestige and privileges of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished.

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematized division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate - inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism.

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers.

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their moral rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments.

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers.

Very commonly - though it has not yet crystallized as compulsory social behaviour - a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (ukwapapa)[7] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an elder child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[8].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[9] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[10]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the umwapapa[11], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the umwapapa threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the umwapapa with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the umwapapa at the

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[7] Cf. Wilson, Conventions of Burial, p. 8, n. 4: mwapapa.
[8] Wilson has described burials (ifwa, ag.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.
[9] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Bantu Studies, XV, p. 393.
[10] Cf. Pöllabora, p. 338.
[11] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 230; pl. bawapa, p. 31; Wilson, Introduction, p. 287, awapapa (hereditary priests).